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The Rev. G.P. Klijn is the author of the following letter. He was born in 1907 and was a newspaper journalist before his theological studies. In 1947 he was entrusted by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church with the so-called "Open Door work", a modern form of evangelism by the Institute "Church and World" at Driebergen. He is "press-reverend" of the Reformed Church and chief editor of the periodical "The Open Door", described below. The Rev. Klijn is a well-known broadcaster in the Netherlands.

A NEW METHOD OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL

One of the means which the Dutch Reformed Church uses to bring the Gospel to the attention of those who have become estranged from it, or who have never known it, is the work of the "Open Door".

The "Open Door" is the name of a fortnightly illustrated paper which purposely limits itself to the modest size of eight pages. The paper attempts to present the actual problems of modern man in the light of the Gospel. It aims at calling him to the realization of his actual situation in the startling world of today, and also at telling him of the liberation of life in Christ. In order to achieve this the paper adopts a popular tone and adapts itself to the mood and mind of the average non-church goer. It does not proclaim with the authority of the Church from her Chancel, but wants to stand beside humanity in the concrete situation of its daily cares, trials, and needs. Whatever then may be said from the Gospel must not only take into account the sociological background of the reader, but must also be of a first-class journalistic level not inferior to that of a first-class magazine.

This is why a preacher who has been used to working as a journalist for a daily paper acts as editor, and why furthermore, the best publicists among preachers and laymen work for the paper. The paper begins each

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number with a gripping modern photograph of everyday life covering the whole of the front page, to which a leading article by the editor is devoted on page 2. Based on the concrete situation depicted, the article institutes an inquiry into the deepest backgrounds of life and the answer which the Gospel provides. The regularity of this procedure causes the reader to speculate, on the appearance of each new number, what the Gospel will have to say on precisely this subject. Furthermore the paper publishes articles of apologetic purport concerning questions of faith and Church, popular films (what has the Gospel to say on the views of life depicted in this film?), on personal and family life, a column for the sick, and one for children.

Great use is made of modern illustration, often of "candid photography", in which the best photographers cooperate. In our visual era especially, modern illustration supplies a strong means for publicizing the Gospel by means of photographs, and even press photographs, which depict actual happenings and which are accompanied by comments from the Gospel. The paper has a growing edition of, at the moment, 130,000 copies per fortnight. Special numbers such as the Christmas number reach an edition of 300,000 copies.

Of more importance even than the paper itself is the manner in which it is used. The readers do not receive their copies by post, but personally by hand. In order to do this, "Open Door" groups are formed in parishes, teams of lay volunteers who first deliver the paper gratis a few times to the non-church goers so as to be able to ask later whether the paper is permanently wanted on payment of a small subscription. Approximately 40 to 60% of the trial addresses subscribe. The co-workers (approx. 6,000 -60% women- in 350 parishes) thus acquire a kind of right in a certain street or district where they are soon known as the man or woman of the "Open Door" and gradually gain a measure of the people's confidence by the regular delivery of the paper. They endeavour to sympathize with the families and sooner or later to begin a discussion on the questions and problems of life in order to bear witness in this to Christ as Lord and Deliverer.

Thus in a simple way the "Open Door" work offers an opportunity for the members of the parish to take an active part in the missionary work of the Church. The workers meet regularly in order to strengthen themselves mutually by prayer and study of the Bible, to exchange experiences and to train for the work of lay witness. Besides these local meetings of workers, country and regional training weekends are arranged for the team leaders.

So-called "Open Door" services, Bible study centres, and discussion evenings are organized for the readers, where witness to the Gospel is born in a simple but striking way. Thousands sometimes participate in these meetings.

Thus the "Open Door" work has a double influence. It not only brings the message of the Gospel to the non-church goers in a form comprehensible to modern man, but is also an effective way of stimulating the

parishes within the Church to their own activity in the work of evangelism.

A social facet of the work is shown in the organization of the Holiday Weeks for tired mothers and working women. In seven Summer camps approximately 300 members of the readers' circle, often from completely non-church going homes, find a week of rest, relaxation and simple contemplation of the Gospel.

In addition to this the editor addresses himself monthly to the readers via a broadcast, in which the preaching of the Gospel is strongly supported by short plays, modern music and declamation of the Bible. The number of listeners is estimated at 2 to 300,000.

The "Open Door" work set up in 1947 by the Dutch Reformed Church forms a growing part of the work of "Church and World", the apostolic centre of the Reformed Church at Driebergen. In ten years' time the "Open Door" has developed a fruitful doublesidedness. On the one hand: a periodical contact via the paper with the semi- or non-church goers from which chances for discussion, "Open Door" services, and a definite wireless connexion arise. On the other hand: a simple and attainable possibility of activating parish members, and their education and development as members of a militant community of Christ in the world. It is a form of apostleship which is figuratively on the border between Church and world, and is active in feeding, helping and serving outisde the Church; and, within the Church, building and shaping true community life. It would be a joy to us if this could be of use as an example and a possibility elsewhere.